

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, February 10, 2003

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Bloomfield, Raser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger, and Wallace present. Absent: Clement, Borys, Kreider, and Senhauser

MINUTES

The minutes of the Monday, January 6, 2003 meeting were approved (motion by Sullebarger, second by Wallace).

The minutes of the October 6, 1997 Historic Conservation Board meeting were approved to be filed (motion by Bloomfield, second by Sullebarger).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1943 AUBURN AVENUE, AUBURN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report on this request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new single-family residence at 1943 Auburn Avenue. The vacant lot is situated within the Auburn Avenue Local Historic District and the Mt. Auburn National Register Historic District. Ms. Cowden stated that the single-family, two-story brick dwelling that previously occupied the lot was demolished prior to 1980.

Applicant/architect Michael S. Keifling was the only person in attendance at the pre-hearing conference that was held on February 4, 2003. Ms. Cowden stated that staff received two phone calls regarding the project. Evelyn Jones of 1950 Bigelow thought the construction of the new house involved the demolition of her residence. Once staff clarified the project, Ms. Jones expressed no further concerns. Bob Luckerman of City Cure located at 1947 Auburn Avenue contacted staff with questions regarding the stone retaining walls that are on the southern edge of his property and along Walker Street. He wished to confirm that any new wall or modifications to the existing retaining walls would be part of the permit review process. Staff has received no comment from the Mt. Auburn Community Council regarding the project and Logan Homes, who owns the property, was twice scheduled to go in front of the Mt. Auburn Community Council and both times was unable to present the project.

Ms. Cowden described details of the proposed residence. She concluded that it is compatible with the surrounding district and with the buildings sited nearby in terms of its material construction, detailing, siting, and massing and is consistent with the Auburn Avenue Historic Conservation Guidelines for new construction. Ms. Cowden noted that the lot is appropriately zoned for the proposed single-family residence and Buildings and Inspections staff has confirmed that as proposed, no variances will be required. She added that staff believes that a few elements, e.g., the cornice, could be improved and that the architect was agreeable to reviewing and possibly refining the design.

David Lockwood from Logan Homes and architect Michael Keifling were in attendance to respond to questions from the Board. Mr. Keifling confirmed for Mr. Bloomfield that the step back in the front and side were to articulate the bays, emphasize the corner and give variation to the long side elevation. He stated that there is a vacant parking lot that makes the corner of the building highly visible from Auburn Avenue. Mr. Bloomfield commented that the articulation does not add a lot to the design and that the 6"- 8" they lose in the set back could be important space on the inside of the structure. Additionally, Mr. Bloomfield questioned the appropriateness of the pyramidal cap, which disrupts the line created by the mansard roof and dormer. Mr. Keifling replied that the tower roof matches the building at the other end of the row visible in Figure 4 of the staff report. Responding to Mr. Raser, Mr. Keifling stated the garage door and rear deck rail (visible from Dorchester and Walker) will have a painted finish.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Sullebarger) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed new single-family residence with the condition that final construction drawings shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval prior to construction.

UPDATES

Demolition Permits

Urban Conservator Forwood informed the Board that there has been a significant increase in the number of demolition permit applications, particularly in Over-the-Rhine. Three buildings were recently approved for emergency demolition including 14 West McMicken (previously reviewed by the Board) and an early twentieth century gas station at 150 West McMicken. In addition, the building at 100 West Elder, for which the Board approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for rehabilitation on November 25, 2002, has been ordered down having suffered a partial collapse while under construction. The Department of Community Development and Planning is working on an arrangement for a new owner to preserve it. Mr. Forwood noted that several buildings on Mulberry Street have suffered structural damage as they continue to move down hill.

Ms. Wallace questioned the status of the Walnut Hills Presbyterian Church. Ms. Sullebarger responded that Jim King and Reverend Jordan are still negotiating.

Ms. Sullebarger asked about the status of the past Receivership Program in Over-the-Rhine that began in 1996. Mr. Forwood responded that City funding for this pilot program ended last year and the Abandoned Buildings Company has been relatively inactive since. The project had proven effective in forcing owners to repair their buildings, but if formal legal action was required and ABC gained property control, remedial work proved more costly and time consuming than anticipated. Mr. Forwood said he understood funds for a Receivership Program had been budgeted for the coming year; however, ABC will not administer the program nor will it be limited to Over-the-Rhine.

Approved Products/Staff Approvals

Mr. Forwood said the City is developing a One Stop Permit Center with the goal of expediting the building permit process. He called the Board's attention to the Window Directory developed by the National Park Service that had been included in their mailings. Mr. Raser noted that there is no reference to vinyl or vinyl-clad

windows in the directory. Mr. Forwood said that staff had been developing a similar product list for windows (and other building products) that the Board might adopt. The Board might then authorize the Urban Conservator to approve projects using accepted products, without requiring a Board hearing. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt emphasized the need to accelerate the formation of a subcommittee to address pre-approved lists.

Mr. Forwood suggested that the Board also authorize the Urban Conservator to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for work approved by the National Park Service for certification as Certified Historic Rehabilitation under the Tax Act. Ms. Sullebarger agreed that since federal guidelines for Tax Act certification are generally more stringent than historic district regulations, allowing the Urban Conservator to approve those having received certification could be one way to expedite those applications. The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Bloomfield) to authorize the Urban Conservator to approve for City purposes projects that have obtained Part 2 approval for Tax Credit.

Board Membership/Training

Mr. Forwood referred to the CLG Training and Education Questionnaire distributed by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. The Board concluded that individuals that have been appointed to Cincinnati's Historic Conservation Board have been familiar with historic preservation issues and processes. The district guidelines distributed upon appointment provide the additional details necessary for Board members to make informed decisions. Mr. Forwood indicated he would respond to the questionnaire on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Forwood asked that members think about associates that would complement the Board whose names could be submitted for the City Manager's consideration in filling anticipated vacancies. He emphasized the need to identify persons not only with preservation experience, but with a working knowledge and sensitivity to developing historic properties and neighborhoods.

The Department of Community Development and Planning

Mr. Forwood reported that the merger of the Department of Planning with Community Development has been rather seamless and that day-to-day activities are being handled without interruption. He said there have already been greater opportunities to identify historic issues earlier in development as lines of communication have improved. The Board and staff will be called upon to help develop and support both rehabilitation and new construction projects within the historic districts.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date